

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An image processor (14) supporting very high-speed printing. The image processor (14) preferably has two separate connections to a source (12) of the image being printed, e.g., a printer control bus (34) and an image data bus (36). The image processor 5 (14) preferably accepts images from the image source (12) in commonly known graphics file formats, such as the well-known 24-bit, uncompressed TIFF file format. The image processor (14) is a multiprocessor implementation. Preferably, one processor (30) coordinates or "orchestrates" control of the printing system and handshaking with the image source via the printer control bus (34) and the other processor (32) functions as a 10 raster image processor (RIP) processor (52) and accepts and stores images into the printer environment from the image source (12) via the image data bus (36). The RIP processor (52) preferably performs color separation on the image into color planes and transmits each color plane to a separate processing path from that point on in the imaging chain. Each color plane preferably has a separate imaging path out from a shared image data bus 15 (62). This separate path for each color plane preferably includes a band manager (54), a print engine or nozzle controller (60), and a print head (58).